Outbreak of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

CARPHA Situation Report – No. 17 March 2, 2020

Summary

This is an update to the Situation Report in relation to the outbreak of COVID-19, published on February 28, 2020.

The number of cases reported from mainland China continues to trend downward, while there has been an exponential increase in the number of cases reported from outside of China.

This weekend the first reported cases in the Caribbean Region were reported. The rapidly evolving situation now requires a shift in mindset in all countries from preparedness to readiness and rapid response.

Health authorities in the Member States must be ready to respond to possible importation of cases and subsequent local transmission. They are also encouraged to increase their capacity for surveillance and review their pandemic preparedness plans, as a matter of urgency.

Updates in this report
- COVID-19 cases have been reported in the Caribbean Region
- Coordinated regional response
- COVID-19 Surveillance data from Member States

Numbers at a Glance

Clinically diagnosed and laboratory confirmed cases

Globally
88930 cases (5138 new)

In China
80174 cases (1212 new)
2915 deaths (127 new)
44607 recovered (8295 new)

Rest of the World
64 countries and Other* (12 new)
8756 cases (3926 new)
548 recovered (198 new)
129 deaths (50 new)

*Persons on board the Diamond Princess cruise ship harbored in Yokohama, Japan

WHO Risk Assessment

China Very High
Globally Very High
Caribbean Moderate to High

Situation Update

There remain considerable uncertainties in assessing the risk of the COVID-19 outbreak, due to lack of detailed epidemiological analyses.

Risk Assessment

On 28 February, the World Health Organization updated the global risk assessment levels from High to Very High. In a Media briefing on Sunday 1 March, Dr Carissa Etienne Director of PAHO indicated that the WHO was considering whether to declare the outbreak a pandemic. The Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison, on 27 February activated their Pandemic Response Plan for COVID-19.
CARPHA has upgraded the risk of disease transmission to the Caribbean Region to **Moderate to High**. The revised risk level is based on international risk assessment guidelines, particularly in keeping with MERS-COV and pandemic influenza and informed by several factors:

1. Multiple countries outside the epicentre of the outbreak have reported secondary cases from imported cases, including an increasing number of countries reporting sustained community transmission. Countries with widespread or sustained community transmission outside of China include Iran, Italy, Japan and South Korea (CDC). These are countries where persons infected with COVID-19 include some who are unsure where and how they became infected.
2. Sustained transmission of disease in countries with direct flights into the Caribbean Region, and reports of confirmed cases in at least two countries in the Caribbean sub-region.
3. Three Latin America with direct flights and/or shared borders with Caribbean Countries have confirmed cases. Confirmed cases of COVID-19 were reported in Brazil, Ecuador and Mexico. Other countries in the region are reportedly managing suspected cases.
4. The recent trend has shown more new cases reported from countries outside of China than from China.¹

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and some Caribbean countries have updated travel alerts and advisories to include several countries reporting sustained community transmission.

**Epidemiological Summary**

**COVID-19 in the Caribbean**

*As of March 1 2020, the first cases of COVID-19 in the Caribbean were reported. Three imported cases have been reported from St. Barthélemy (St. Barts)² and one in the Dominican Republic.³ Since the last Situation Report, one case of COVID-19 has been reported in Ecuador and three in Mexico. Brazil continues to only have one case reported.*

The data contained in Table 1 are obtained from data reported by the WHO, supplemented by other sources – (Reference 1 and 2 in Table 1).

As of March 2, there were 88,930 cases of patients with COVID-19. Outside of China, sixty-four (64) countries have confirmed at least one case among travellers exposed in China, Iran or Italy and/or person-to-person contact. Of the deaths reported to date, 129 were from outside of Mainland China. Several new countries in Europe (Czech Republic, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Monaco), Asia (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Indonesia, Qatar), the Americas (Ecuador, Mexico) and one in the Caribbean (Dominican Republic) reported their first confirmed

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² Agence de Sante, Prefecture of Guadeloupe. Press Release [https://la1ere.francetvinfo.fr/sites/regions_outremer/files/assets/documents/2020/03/01/bulletin_ndeg1_coronavirus_-1297489.pdf](https://la1ere.francetvinfo.fr/sites/regions_outremer/files/assets/documents/2020/03/01/bulletin_ndeg1_coronavirus_-1297489.pdf)


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case of COVID-19 in the last 72 hours. Confirmed cases reported from China’s Hubei province include clinically diagnosed cases without laboratory confirmation.

See Table 1 for more details on cases, deaths and recoveries.

**Table 1: Countries or Territories with reported cases of COVID-19, 2 March 2020**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Country/Territory</th>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>Deaths</th>
<th>Recovered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>China*</td>
<td>80174</td>
<td>2915</td>
<td>44607</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rest of Asia**</td>
<td>5805</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oceania</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>1689</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>129</td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rest of Europe***</td>
<td>171</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>France</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>United Kingdom†</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americas</td>
<td>United States of America‡</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>In transit (Japan: Cruise Ship)</td>
<td>706</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Epidemiological assessment

The epidemiology of COVID-19 has been characterized based on preliminary information and statistics from early cases. COVID-19 patients present in three levels of severity (WHO):

- **Mild 80%**: Patients presenting with some of the following mild flu-like symptoms: fever, nausea, cough, vomiting, and diarrhoea; some may develop dyspnea or a mild pneumonia. Most patients will not progress past this phase, will recover after a week and may be cared for at home.
- **Severe 15%**: Severe patients present with severe pneumonia, acute respiratory distress syndrome, and sepsis. These patients require hospitalisation but still can recover with good medical care.
- **Critical 5%**: Critical patients have respiratory failure (requiring mechanical ventilation), septic shock, and multi-organ failure and require care in an Intensive Care Unit (ICU).

Mission

CARPHA’s aim is to work with regional and international health partners to respond to this public health threat and provide timely advice and assistance to Member States and stakeholders.

Governance

CARPHA’S Incident Management Team – Emergency Response (IMT-ER) is leading the health response in keeping with CARPHA’s mandate from the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA). The IMT-ER produces Situation Reports three times weekly.

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5 World Health Organization. Clinical management of severe acute respiratory infection when novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) infection is suspected. 28 January 2020

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Operations
Surveillance and Technical Response

- CARPHA distributed a modified Weekly Syndromic Surveillance and COVID-19 Reporting Form to Member States to include COVID-19 surveillance in each week’s report. CARPHA received feedback from only four (4) Member States on the form at the time of this report. Summary of COVID-19 surveillance received from Member States is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: CARPHA Surveillance received from Member States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reporting Source</th>
<th>Airport</th>
<th>Seaport</th>
<th>Overall Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Travellers with exposure or travel history</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symptomatic travellers seen at Health facilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travellers quarantined by public health authority</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travellers self-quarantined at home</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of travellers completing 14-day isolation/quarantine</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of travellers tested during the reporting period</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>N/R</td>
<td>N/R</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probable</td>
<td>N/R</td>
<td>N/R</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>N/R</td>
<td>N/R</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two Member States reported data from EPI-Week 8. N/R – Not reported.

- CARPHA is working with regional partners to develop a Pandemic Preparedness Plan to guide a coordinated response across Member States, should local transmission of COVID-19 become established in the Region.
- The CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS), has expanded the tracking of passengers from China to include countries with CDC travel advisories (Hong Kong, Japan, Italy, South Korea, Iran). The Joint Regional Communication Centre (JRCC) will track and send relevant information to countries.
Various technical guidelines have been developed including algorithms to assist CARPHA Member States (CMS) to triage and manage suspected cases within their borders and in clinical settings. To view all CARPHA technical guidance documents regarding COVID-19, please visit the Agency’s website at http://carpha.org/What-We-Do/Public-Health/Novel-Coronavirus (See also a list on the last page of this Report).

**Laboratory**

- CARPHA Medical Microbiology Laboratory (CMML) is working closely with Laboratory Directors on plans of action to manage the COVID-19 emergency.
- The Laboratory Update #2 was circulated on Friday, February 28th. These outline amendments to the samples to be accepted for testing at CMML.
- Effective March 2nd, only Nasopharyngeal and Oropharyngeal swabs (paired) will be accepted for testing. Neither urine nor serum will be further required.
- Table 3 provides a breakdown of the number of samples and the results for tests carried out by CMML as at Epi weeks 9.

**Table 3: Summary of laboratory test results for SARS-CoV-2 conducted at CMML and by National Public Health Laboratories as at 28 February 2020.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Cumulative No. Patients</th>
<th>No. of Tests</th>
<th>Positive Tests for COVID-19</th>
<th>Negative Tests for COVID-19</th>
<th>Other Diagnosis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CARPHA Medical Microbiology Laboratory</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinidad &amp; Tobago</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Influenza A (H1N1) pdm09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Lucia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Influenza A (H1N1) pdm09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BVI</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bermuda</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Influenza B Victoria (no deletions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Vincent and The Grenadines</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Influenza B Victoria (no deletions) x 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>48</strong></td>
<td><strong>0</strong></td>
<td><strong>48</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Member State Laboratories (In-country testing)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbados</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Communication and Information**

- On the 28th February 2020, CARPHA dispatched a media release to the region to update media outlets on the increased risk of spread of COVID-19 to the Caribbean Region. [http://carpha.org/Portals/0/Documents/Media%20Releases/CARPHAUpgradesCOVIDRisk.pdf](http://carpha.org/Portals/0/Documents/Media%20Releases/CARPHAUpgradesCOVIDRisk.pdf)
- On the 28th February 2020, CARPHA Communications Unit met with the Regional Health Communications Network (RHCN) to discuss and provide updates on country’s level of preparedness and health promotion activities. Thirteen member states and CARICOM were in attendance.
- Leaders at the 31st Intercessional Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of CARICOM welcomed the Communication Strategy developed by CARPHA to increase public knowledge on actions to prevent importation and/or transmission of the virus in the Region. They noted that the strategy was important to counter myths and misinformation, thereby reducing potential social media hysteria associated with the fear of an outbreak in CARICOM Member States.
- On 17th February 2020, CARPHA Executive Director, Dr. Joy St John appeared as guest (virtually) on Grenada Broadcasting Network’s ‘Beyond the Headlines with Grenada Minister of Health, The Honourable Nickolas Steele and Chief Medical Officer, Dr Francis Martin to discuss COVID-2019: national and regional overview. [https://youtu.be/BTzAH7c-i04](https://youtu.be/BTzAH7c-i04)
- CARPHA’s Executive Director participated in a joint virtual media briefing with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), hosted by the Caribbean Broadcasting Union for its print, television, and radio audiences.
- On 10th February, CARPHA distributed a media release titled ‘CARPHA Medical Microbiology Laboratory is Ready to Respond to 2019-nCoV’.
- CARPHA Communications Unit is working closely with the Regional Health Communications Network (RHCN) and other stakeholders to provide timely updates and information. They have also developed various videos and infographics to counteract myths about the disease circulating in the Region. The latest media release and other relevant guidelines are available on CARPHA’s website [http://carpha.org/What-We-Do/Public-Health/Novel-Coronavirus](http://carpha.org/What-We-Do/Public-Health/Novel-Coronavirus).

**Logistics and Planning**

- Samples from Member States and reagents are being processed through the Trinidad and Tobago Customs Department without delay.
- Several Member States have implemented various measures to limit importation of the disease, including screening at ports of entry. Details can be obtained from the Ministries of Health of each Member State.

**Stakeholder Engagement**

CARPHA is working closely with various stakeholders for a coordinated regional response, including the following:

- The Executive Director and Acting Director of Surveillance Disease Prevention and Control attended the CARICOM Heads of State meeting in Barbados on 1 March 2020 to give clear guidance on how countries should proceed in their efforts to prepare their countries to a possible COVID-19 outbreak in their countries and a likely COVID-19 pandemic declaration by WHO.
• Convened a second meeting of the expert Technical Advisory Group to begin to finalize guidance for a Coordinated Regional Response Plan. Expert advice was provided on the management of cases among paediatric, pregnant, and newborn patients. Also discussed was the importance of addressing the mental and psychosocial health of the people of the community and health staff during this response.

• CARPHA attended 2 meetings with COHSOD to inform them on CARPHA’s actions to ensure a coordinated regional response to ensure better regional security.

• The Executive Director and Acting Director of Surveillance Disease Prevention and Control represented CARPHA at a CARICOM Heads of Government Press Conference to provide updated information on the current situation and what is being done to keep the region safe.

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• Convened a meeting with CDEMA to provide an update on the situation and discuss the need for clear guidelines for CMS and cruise ships to ensure CMS know when practique can be denied.

• The working group of CARPHA, FCCA and CDEMA met to better clarify what cruise ships will do to assist in correct and on time reporting as ensure the CMS know their rights and responsibilities.

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• Convened working group with the Florida Caribbean Cruise Association (FCCA) and CDEMA to address accurate reporting of illnesses on cruise ships to countries and ensure countries respond according to IHR guidelines.

• Established an expert Technical Advisory Group to provide guidance on the management of cases, should transmission occur in the Region. The first meeting was held on 21 February and the second meeting was held on 28 February. The Technical Advisory Group has contributed to the development of guidelines to assist CMS to create and implement plans on how to respond and care for cases of COVID-19 and how to address managing outbreak issues on cruise ships.

• Convened joint briefings of National Disaster Coordinators and CMOs in association with CDEMA on situation update and provided advice for various sectors on how to respond to different phase and stages of local outbreak scenario. Participated in the second and third Emergency Meeting of the Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD) of the CARICOM on COVID-19. The meeting discussed the approach to a regional coordination of COVID-19.

• Hold weekly coordination meetings with PAHO regional representatives.
The Executive Director and Acting Director of Surveillance Disease Prevention and Control represented CARPHA at the 31st Intersessional Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of CARICOM, in Barbados on 18-19 February. They presented on the regional coordination of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) including a regional communication strategy for COVID-19. CARPHA’s role in the regional response and the collaborative effort of regional organisations was highly commended by various CARICOM Heads at the meeting.

They participated in CDEMA-led Regional Exercise Region Rap 2020 to test CDEMA’s means of communication with their stakeholders.

They held coordination meeting with Dr. Jean Marie PAHO/WHO Representative (PWR) Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean and the World Bank on support to the preparation activities of Grenada, St Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Dominica.

- Delivered health education lecture on COVID-19 to Medical Officers of Health and Public Health Inspectors from all municipal corporations in Trinidad, at a meeting organised by the Port of Spain Municipal Corporation and the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development on 14 February.
- Convened the Regional Coordinating Mechanism for Health Security (RCM-HS), consisting of Member States, regional and international agencies (including CDEMA, CARICOM, Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), PAHO, CDC, Public Health England (PHE), Public Health Agency Canada (PHAC and others), with agreement on a joint harmonised regional response.
- Ongoing communications with CARICOM on regional health response to COVID-19.
- Convened a webinar for Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) and Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) and Ministers of Tourism on “Mitigating the impact of Coronavirus” with over 120 participants.
- Ongoing communications with Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) with regards to the Caribbean response to COVID-19 situation on cruise ships.
- Held nine COVID-19 response coordination meetings with Chief Medical Officers and CARICOM.

Way Forward
CARPHA is advising that with the rapid spread of the virus from China to 64 other countries, including to countries in Latin America, Member States need to be alert and in a state of readiness for any imported cases and subsequent local transmission. Health authorities in CARPHA Member States must be ready to scale up health system capacity to respond fast; systems will need to be in place to identify, isolate, manage and treat sporadic cases, clusters and contact tracing. Countries must now be ready to respond to imported cases, from any of the countries with confirmed cases and increasingly from areas with presumed ongoing community transmission. Member States are advised to alert diseases surveillance systems for acute respiratory infections/severe acute respiratory infections and review actions in the alert phase of their pandemic preparedness plans, as a matter of urgency.
CARPHA would like to draw attention to various guidance documents, including several protocols for early investigations available from WHO website https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200216-sitrep-27-covid-19.pdf?sfvrsn=78c0eb78_2

CARPHA is working with technical experts across the Region to provide up-to-date guidance and technical advice to CMS. CARPHA stands ready to provide support and guidance to Member States on how to strengthen their health systems response should there be person-to-person transmission in the Caribbean.

Various CARPHA documents can be accessed from our website using the embedded links:

**Technical Documents**
- Traveller’s Guidelines
- Algorithm for Management of a suspected case
- Guidelines for Ports of Entry
- Guidelines for Conveyances
- Algorithm for contact tracing on conveyances
- Updated Travel Brief
- Interim Guidance about the Coronavirus Disease (COVID19) for Hotels and Guesthouses in the Caribbean

**Media Releases**
- CARPHA Upgrades the Risk of Transmission of Coronavirus in the Caribbean to Moderate to High
- CARPHA Commended for Regional Response to Coronavirus COVID-19 at Heads of Government
- The Risk of 2019-nCoV Remains Low for the Caribbean but CARPHA Encourages Vigilance at Ports of Entry
- 2019-nCoV: CARPHA urges the Region to be Vigilant, Be Prepared
- Risk of Novel Coronavirus in the Caribbean "Low" says CARPHA, but Preparation Needed
- CARPHA Medical Microbiology Laboratory is Ready to Respond to 2019-nCoV

**Communications Material**
- Is there a new bleach cocktail that can cure and protect against the Flu and the Novel Coronavirus?
- How is the Novel Coronavirus new? Lysol and Clorox have “Human Coronavirus” listed on their labels
- Can a surgical mask protect me from coronavirus? CARPHA Biorisk Manager explains
- Who should wear a mask for protection against coronavirus? CARPHA Biorisk Manager responds
- Card 1: Cover your nose and mouth
  Card 2: Cough or sneeze into elbow

**External Online Training Resources**
- Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) for Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). OpenWHO
- A general introduction to emerging respiratory viruses, including novel coronaviruses (available in French, Simplified Chinese, and Spanish as well). OpenWHO
- Health and safety briefing for respiratory diseases - ePROTECT. OpenWHO
- ECDC Micro Learning platform – A suite of short (<2 hours) courses on the control of COVID-19
References

- Trinidad and Tobago Newsday. Coronavirus Hits Caribbean. Access on 2 March, 2020 at 9:30am https://newsday.co.tt/2020/03/02/coronavirus-hits-caribbean/